Appeals Court Invokes Bail Reform Act Post 12-22-79

Nine Scientologists Released

Nine members of the Church of Scientology, who were convicted for their roles in a massive plot to burglarize and spy on government offices and obstruct justice, were ordered released from prison yesterday pending the outcome of their case in the federal appeals court here.

U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey, who found the church members guilty of the offenses and then earlier this month ordered them to immediately, begin serving prison terms agreed to the release of the defendants provided they had paid $81,000 in fines alos imposed at sentencing. Attorneys for defendants late yesterday began arrangements for their clients' release.

Richey took the action late yesterday after the U.S. Court of Appeals granted release requests for three of the nine defendants. A three-judge appeals panel said those defendants were elibilbe for relase under the Bail Reform Act because there was no significant risk that the defendants would pose a danger to the community or fail to show up at their next scheduled court appearance.

Richey subsequently decided tha the appeals court decision would apply to all nine church members.